

# Saddlers and Upholsterers

## Index of Freemen

Indexed records	DCG 13/2
<b>GUIDE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This index comprises a list of Durham City Guilds freemen, in alphabetical order. Draper apprenticeships are not recorded in the company's records in a systematic way.</li><li>• Researchers are advised to browse widely among possible variant spellings of surnames.</li><li>• Freemen's parents or guardians' names, where present, precede masters' names: <i>s</i> abbreviates 'son of', and <i>es</i> 'eldest son of'.</li><li>• Freemen who had served apprenticeships had often been re-assigned or 'turned over' to new masters, in which cases an additional (adjacent) entry has been made in this index. These turn overs can be identified by checking individuals of the same name, parentage and indenture/registration date within the preceding 7-10 years. (While the date of such turn overs, when reported in the original record, is recorded in an underlying database, the first indenture/registration date is repeated in this index at each of a freeman's subsequent turn overs to aid identification.)</li><li>• The date is of a person's admission to freedom.</li><li>• Apprenticeship terms typically ranged from 7 to 10 years, depending on the Company, occasionally with an additional contracted year as the 'hired man' of the master: an apprentice might seek admittance as a freeman of the Company and of the City immediately upon the completion of his term of servitude, (he being over 21 years of age), or after a period of years. Apprentices traditionally served from the age of fourteen. The period of servitude, when known, is stated in round brackets after the admission date, where (N) indicates an unknown number of years.</li><li>• Eldest sons of freemen might, upon reaching 21 years of age, in turn gain their freedom by 'patrimony' without serving a term of apprenticeship. In the Mercers' Company (and, for a period, in the Drapers' Company as well) <i>any</i> son of a freeman could gain his freedom in this way. Consequently the index of freemen should also be consulted in order to be sure of making a comprehensive search of the indexed guild records for any particular person.</li><li>• In addition to admission by servitude (apprenticeship) and patrimony, some freemen were admitted by 'redemption'. A few guilds for a time permitted qualified incomers to buy their way into a Durham guild in order that they might be able to trade in the city, but generally such freemen entering by redemption were 'gentlemen freemen' who were admitted on the understanding that they would not so trade. Finally, a few local MPs, national politicians and local landed powerbrokers were admitted as honorary freemen.</li><li>• The presence of a parent or guardian's name does not necessarily indicate they were living at the time the apprentice was bound to his master.</li></ul>	

- Due to the incomplete state of the records there will be many instances where either only an apprenticeship or only an admission record survives for an individual, and on occasion a master will be noted for whom no apprenticeship or even admission record is extant. In general a newly admitted freeman would not immediately take on an apprentice so soon after his own apprenticeship had been completed, but for freemen admitted by patrimony this rule may not apply as consistently.
- With the steady decline of the guilds' power in the city from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and with increasing industrialisation, a freeman's guild became less and less indicative of which particular trade he practised; thus, for example, a person apprenticed to a Barber in the later period will probably not have been training in the craft of a barber.
- Durham freemen were exclusively male until 6 February 2012.

## **Freemen**

Busby, William, 21 Jul 1802.